

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
Office of the Governor

Mark R. Warner
Governor

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**GOVERNOR WARNER ANNOUNCES \$10.7 MILLION AWARD FOR
RECORD CHILD SUPPORT COLLECTIONS**

~Federal government recognizes Virginia's exceptional performance with financial award~

RICHMOND - Governor Mark R. Warner today announced that the federal government has awarded the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) with \$10.7 million as a bonus for exceptional performance in child support enforcement. The money will be reinvested in Virginia's Child Support Enforcement Program to further increase payment collections.

"Children's futures depend on the support and encouragement they receive from their parents," said Governor Warner. "Virginia is determined to ensure that parents who owe child support follow through on their financial obligations to their children. This award demonstrates that the commitment and innovative strategies of VDSS are working to make child support collection more effective in Virginia."

The VDSS Department of Child Support Enforcement has collected a record \$561 million in fiscal year 2005, a five percent increase over the previous year. Virginia's five percent increase was greater than the 3.2 percent increase in child support collections nationally. The Virginia Child Support Enforcement Program is cost-effective, collecting \$6.33 for every dollar spent, which exceeds the maximum federal cost effectiveness goal of \$5.00 collected per dollar spent.

This marks the fifth consecutive year VDDS has received an incentive award for excellence in child support enforcement. The Federal Office of Child Support Enforcement calculates state incentives based on performance in five categories: support order establishment, current collections, past due collections, paternity establishment, and cost effectiveness. Virginia received exceptional marks in all five categories. To be eligible for incentives, states must pass an annual data reliability audit. The federal government has certified Virginia's child support data in both its automated system and case files as reliable.

"Reliable and accurate information is key to ensuring that children receive the support they deserve," said Anthony Conyers, Jr., VDSS Commissioner. "Parents who provide financial, emotional, and physical support for their children are contributing to their well-being, their opportunities for success, and the future of the Commonwealth."

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Virginia's child support caseload includes 360,000 cases and 484,000 children. These children represent almost one-quarter of Virginia's child population, and the children are owed a combined \$2.2 billion in child support. Virginia recently unveiled a new strategy to increase collections of child support payments. VDSS launched the 2005 Most Wanted Child Support Evaders newspaper advertising campaign in August. The campaign, featuring 251 individuals in newspapers across the state, has already resulted in 60 arrests, \$50,000 in payments, and the establishment of \$73,000 in wage withholdings from an additional 21 individuals.

For more information on child support enforcement in Virginia visit the VDSS Web site at <http://www.dss.virginia.gov/family/dcse.html>.

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